

Love of Local Places Showcased at Lafayette Library Exhibit

By Kara Navolio



"Calibogue Sound," a watercolor by Geoff Meredith. Image provided



Olga Jusidman's ceramics. Photo Kara Navolio

Three local artists, whose work all reflects the influence of places they have lived in and travelled to, are exhibiting their work at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Community Hall through Sept. 12. The exhibit features oil paintings by Geoff Meredith of Lafayette, pastels and watercolors by Dalia Alekna, and ceramics by Olga Jusidman, both of Walnut Creek.

Meredith's oil paintings include striking landscapes and cityscapes painted in a style referred to as a 21st Century reinterpretation of the Bay Area Figurative Movement of the 1950s and 60s. The influence of artists like Wayne Theibaud and Richard Diebenkorn can be seen in the abstracted landscapes.

"I think we are all influenced by the experiences we have as we are coming of age, and these artists definitely influenced me," explains Meredith. He starts by making a sketch or a study of places he visits, and then takes the work back to his studio to paint. The paintings are grounded in representation, but then become abstracted as he works. Sometimes the abstraction goes further until the landscape is reduced into line, shape and color.

"I'm looking for what works as a painting," adds Meredith, "not necessarily what is a representation of the place."

In "Calibogue Sound" Meredith tips the foreground into a bird's eye view of boats at the pier, challenging the perspective, while the background remains in a more traditional or realistic perspective. The clouds are abstracted to geometric shapes of soft pink.

Meredith's work can also be seen at Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek.

Alekna's pastels reflect her love of Northern California. She originally hails from Lithuania and then Chicago, landing in the Bay Area as a young adult.

"These pastels show my excitement of living here. I feel like I live in paradise, and I want to express my admiration and love of California. I feel so lucky to live here and to be alive," explains Alekna of her beautiful scenes of Mt. Diablo, the California coast, and wine country. "I try to capture the emotional feeling I get from the landscape," she adds. Alekna also works in painting, etching and drawing, and her work can be seen at Diablo Gallery in Walnut Creek.

Jusidman's ceramics are

inspired by her travels around the world. Her current series is reminiscent of boats and her love of water.

Originally from Mexico, Jusidman looks at ceramics as an art form and prefers to make things that are decorative rather than functional. Her vessels reflect her love of texture and organic material. She is a member of the Walnut Creek Clay Arts Guild and shows her work at Main St. Arts in Martinez.

The City of Lafayette's eight member Public Arts Committee chooses artists to show their work in the Community Hall and also inside the Library's Homework Room. Exhibits change about every three months. Commu-

nity Hall is open every Monday from 6-9 p.m. and during public events in the hall. The Homework Room, which currently is showing portraits and landscapes painted by Ruth Stanton, is open

during library hours. Artists can submit an application to be considered for future exhibits at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/city-hall/commissions-committees/public-art-committee/library-gallery.



A watercolor by Dalia Alekna. Photo provided



Another Geoff Meredith oil painting. Image provided

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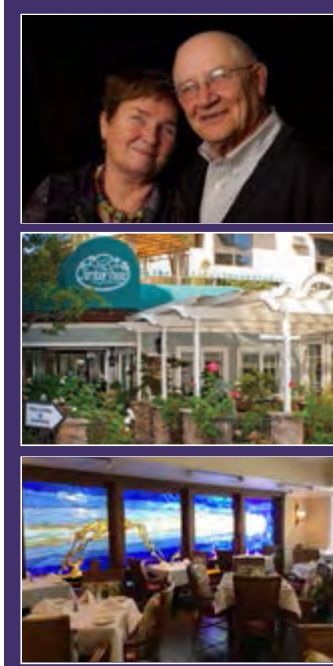
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